

Wycombe Wanderers 1, Hayes 0

WYCOMBE edged through Tuesday night's rigours at Loakes Park with maximum points from four Isthmian games, eight goals, a clean defensive record, but—for the first time this season—something to set them thinking.

COVERED

Despite an almost immediate thigh injury, Amos did not take long to settle in his debut among the Wanderers' front line. He covered much ground looking for possession.

But Tuesday was a difficult night for anyone to make an impact in their first outing with new colleagues—particularly against a former club.

Possibly drawn by the Amos signing, and a warm summer's evening, the Loakes Park crowd surprised by exceeding the 2,000 mark. Spectators watched two stone-wall defences give little or no ground in a match which, for those seeking pure excitement, must have disappointed.

Amos at least proved himself hard to offset in the tackle. Several times during the 90 minutes he won "lost" balls, or made something out of nothing.

Wycombe's insistence on using high-ball tactics against the defensive midfield height of players like Hatt, Wilks, Thomas and ex-Wanderer Les Hartridge, couldn't pay off.

The along-the-ground stuff served by Larry Pritchard was a much better bet. In a game with little spare breathing space, Larry's ability to create an acre from a square yard with ground control, hinted how it should be done.

The visiting attack owed much to the eager Keith Jamie-

son, who has added pep to their raids since signing in the close season from the '72 Amateur Cup winning Hendon line-up.

John Maskell—360 minutes without conceding a goal—maintained his incredible record by diverting a threatening shot from Jamieson round a post for a 42nd minute corner.

Indeed, after a superb showing at Sutton the previous Saturday, he again covered well—this time under considerably extra pressure.

RESTRICTED

Wycombe began the second half still restricted, unable to launch as many positive attacking moves as they would have liked. Hayes were certainly taxing them in a way none of their earlier opponents had.

Home fans grew impatient with the situation, which hardly guaranteed another Wanderers' victory.

But Wycombe eventually found ways to build from their defensive stronghold, in which Paul Birdseye, Gerry Olsen and Dave Bullock offered admirable assistance to their captain.

The Hayes defence was beaten after 62 minutes when Robb Williams netted from a cross by Davies off the right. Mr. Wrennall made a late decision, cancelling the goal for

offside. But it must have been a close thing whether or not a Hayes defender had played the ball back on-side.

Either way, Wycombe came again hoping for another goal to ensure their first League victory over Hayes in their second term as Isthmians.

Another "goal" went by the board as Delaney headed an accurate Davies free kick into the net after 72 minutes. And seven minutes later Wilks headed a dangerous centre by Pritchard away with Amos positioned in front of the visitors' line.

But still skipper Delaney ordered "let's concentrate" to his champions. And the real truth of the evening returned six minutes from time.

Hayes centre forward Brown ran in to meet a free kick from Roberts, but lucklessly thundered his shot onto the cross-bar.

WYCOMBE: Maskell; Birdseye, Olsen, Delaney, Bullock; Davies, Williams, Pritchard; Amos, Searle, Hollifield. Sub.: Hutchinson (not used).

HAYES: Bath; Wilks, Bell, Hatt, Thomas, Hartridge, Kent, Mullen, Brown, Roberts, Jamieson. Sub.: Hobbs (not used).

Referee: Mr. P. C. Wrennall (Burnham).

Half time: 1-0. Goalscorer: Wycombe—Delaney (1 pen).

Official paying attendance: 2,050 (Total approx. 2,450).

They won by courtesy of a controversial first minute penalty, despite the constant challenge by a Hayes side obviously demanding great respect during the campaign ahead.

From Wanderers' viewpoint, the basics were clear. They could rightfully reflect with satisfaction that their back division had given a staunch account of itself when under truly testing pressure for the first time.

But the Blues' failure to organise any concerted, attacking football of their own, served as a warning. They need to devise more widescale plans to break out of defence when being pushed back.

Hayes, a talent packed squad this year, made much of the running—certainly enough to have warranted some reward for their keen, highly competitive play after an immediate setback.

Wycombe spent 89 minutes defending a one-goal lead. Within seconds of kick off, star signing, Tony Amos, was nudged off the ball inside the Hayes area. Referee Wrennall pointed to the spot, and John Delaney duly drove home the penalty with keeper Ian Bath moving the wrong way.

That notched big John's fourth goal in four games, putting him further ahead as Wycombe's top early-season marksman. It also upset Hayes, who seemed less than happy at Mr. Wrennall's verdict.

There was no sulking from the Church Roaders, however. Egged on by lanky skipper Bobby Hatt, they had Wanderers in a sweat for their victory as an intense defensive affair developed.